Fieldwork Paper

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Introduction

This fieldwork project focused on observing and analyzing instructional practices used to support English Language Learners (ELLs) across a variety of classroom settings. The observations took place in a suburban high school setting with diverse English learners across grade levels. Observations were conducted in four classrooms, including ENL and integrated co-teaching environments in social studies, mathematics, and science. In addition, interviews were conducted with two teachers and two English learners to gain insight into both instructional approaches and student experiences. The purpose of this fieldwork was to examine how educators adapt instruction to meet the linguistic and academic needs of diverse learners, while also promoting engagement and language development. Through the combination of classroom observations and interviews, several key themes emerged, including the use of scaffolding, the role of academic language, the importance of student interaction, and the need to balance support with increasing independence. These findings provide valuable insight into effective practices for supporting English learners and have important implications for my own teaching as an ENL social studies educator. This analysis will examine how these themes emerged across both instructional practices and student experiences. Supporting artifacts, fieldnotes, and classroom materials are included in the Appendix.

Observation 1 - ENL 2 Classroom

Where: Westhampton Beach High School

Date: March 23rd, 2026

Time: 3rd period, 9:05am-9:46am

Pre-Observation Preparation:

The purpose of this observation was to examine instructional strategies used to support L2 reading development, student engagement, and differentiation in an ENL classroom. I prepared by bringing my laptop and using a structured observation format to document descriptive, reflective, and analytic notes.

Descriptive Notes (Objective):

9:05 AM – Students enter and sit in a semicircle facing the board. A word wall with academic vocabulary is displayed on the side wall. The teacher greets each student individually at the door. Do Now is projected: *"Write one sentence about your weekend using past tense."*

9:08 AM – Students begin writing independently in notebooks. Some students look at the word wall and previous notes. One student asks, "How do you say 'I go' in past?" The teacher responds, "Went—try to use that in your sentence." The teacher circulates and prompts students (Q), encouraging them to expand beyond one word answers.

9:12 AM – Students share responses aloud. One student says, "I go to the park," and the teacher responds, "I went to the park," modeling correct past tense. Several students repeat the corrected sentence. The teacher writes one corrected example on the board.

9:15 AM – Teacher introduces lesson objective verbally and on the board: *"We will find the main idea and supporting details in a text."* The teacher briefly explains "main idea" as "what the text is mostly about."

9:18 AM – Teacher distributes an adapted informational article about daily routines. The text includes images next to each paragraph and bolded vocabulary words. Students follow along as the teacher points to the title and headings.

9:20 AM – Teacher pre-teaches vocabulary (*routine, schedule, activity*) by saying each word, having students repeat, and asking students to use each word in a short sentence. One student says, "My routine is school," and the teacher prompts, "Say: My routine is going to school every day."

9:23 AM – Teacher models reading strategy using a think-aloud: "I am reading this paragraph and asking, what is this mostly about?" The teacher underlines a sentence on the projected text. Students watch and follow along on their copies.

9:27 AM – Students work in pairs (GR). Each pair reads the text aloud quietly and underlines key ideas. One student reads while the other follows along. The teacher circulates, asking questions such as, "What is this paragraph about?"

9:33 AM – Students complete a graphic organizer identifying the main idea and two supporting details. Some students refer back to the text, while others ask partners for clarification. The teacher provides individual support to students who appear unsure.

9:40 AM – Whole class discussion. Students share responses using sentence frames: *"The main idea is…"* One student reads directly from the organizer. The teacher asks follow-up questions (Q) to prompt elaboration.

9:44 AM – Teacher provides feedback, clarifies misunderstandings, and restates the main idea for the group.

9:46 AM – Lesson ends. Students submit their graphic organizers as they exit.

Reflective Notes:

The students appeared comfortable participating throughout the lesson, which seemed to be supported by the consistent routines and structured scaffolds in place. The use of sentence frames allowed students to contribute even if they were unsure of their language, and I noticed that multiple students who might typically be hesitant were willing to share their responses. The classroom environment felt supportive and low-risk, which likely contributed to student engagement.

I also noticed that students relied heavily on visuals, such as the images in the text and the word wall, as well as peer support during partner work. This seemed to help them process the content and build confidence in their understanding before sharing with the whole group. It reinforced for me how important it is to provide multiple entry points for comprehension, especially for students at this proficiency level.

At the same time, I observed that some students were dependent on the sentence frames and direct modeling, and did not always extend their responses independently. This made me

think about the balance between providing support and gradually encouraging more independent language production.

If I were teaching this lesson, I would consider incorporating an additional opportunity for students to generate their own questions about the text or respond more open-endedly, in order to push their thinking further. I might also gradually reduce the level of scaffolding for certain students to encourage more independent use of academic language, while still maintaining support for those who need it.

Analytic Notes:

This lesson demonstrated a strong use of scaffolding, which is essential for supporting L2 reading development. For example, during whole-class discussion, students responded using the sentence frame, "The main idea is…," allowing them to participate in academic discourse with reduced linguistic demand. My observation notes also documented the teacher's use of visuals and adapted text supports (see Appendix A2). These strategies align with sheltered instruction practices that make grade-level tasks more accessible (Echevarría et al., 2017). The teacher incorporated multiple layers of support, including pre-teaching vocabulary, using visuals, providing sentence frames, and modeling through think-alouds. These strategies align with research on second language acquisition, which emphasizes the importance of making input comprehensible while still maintaining academic rigor (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014). Additionally, these practices reflect principles of sheltered instruction, where teachers use scaffolds to make content accessible without reducing complexity (Echevarría et al., 2017). By adapting the text and embedding supports, the teacher allowed students to access grade-level skills, such as identifying main idea and supporting details, without being overwhelmed by language demands.

The use of explicit strategy instruction, particularly through the think-aloud, was also effective. By modeling how to identify the main idea, the teacher made the cognitive process visible to students. This reflects best practices in reading instruction, where students benefit from seeing how proficient readers approach a text before attempting it independently. Additionally, the gradual release from teacher modeling to partner work and then independent work supported students in building both comprehension and confidence.

Another important aspect of the lesson was the use of structured student interaction, which aligns with communicative approaches to language learning. Through partner work and whole-class discussion, students had multiple opportunities to use academic language in meaningful contexts. This not only supported comprehension but also allowed students to practice speaking and listening skills in a low-pressure setting.

The lesson also demonstrated effective differentiation. The teacher used sentence frames, visuals, and adapted texts to meet the needs of students at varying proficiency levels. At the same time, all students were working toward the same learning objective, which reflects principles of sheltered instruction (Echevarría et al., 2017). This approach ensures that English learners are not given simplified content, but rather appropriate supports to access rigorous material.

Overall, the instructional strategies observed reflect a balanced approach that integrates language development with content learning. The combination of scaffolding, modeling, interaction, and differentiation supports both comprehension and language acquisition, which are critical for English learners in content-area classrooms.

Key Areas Observed:

a. **Classroom Management & Environment:**

   Students were seated in a semicircle, promoting interaction. Word walls and visuals were displayed.

b. **Instructional Strategies:**

   Think-alouds, vocabulary instruction, guided reading, and use of graphic organizers.

c. **Teacher-Student / Student-Student Interactions:**

   Frequent questioning (Q), peer discussion (GR), and teacher feedback.

d. **Materials & Technology:**

   Adapted text, graphic organizer, and word wall were used. No technology was observed during this lesson.

e. **Differentiation:**

   Sentence frames, visuals, and chunked text supported students at varying proficiency levels.

Post-Observation Reflection:

After reviewing this observation, I noticed the importance of intentionally combining multiple scaffolds to support student comprehension and participation. The lesson reinforced how strategies such as vocabulary pre-teaching, visuals, sentence frames, and think-alouds work together to make complex texts more accessible for English learners. It also highlighted how structured interaction, such as partner work and guided discussion, can support both language development and content understanding.

This observation made me reflect on my own teaching practice, particularly in my ENL social studies classroom. I already incorporate some of these strategies, such as primary source analysis and discussion, but this lesson emphasized the value of being more intentional and consistent with scaffolding at every stage of the lesson. I also noticed how the teacher maintained a balance between support and student participation, which is something I would like to continue developing.

Moving forward, I would like to incorporate more opportunities for student-generated responses, such as having students create their own questions or summarize key ideas in their own words. I would also like to gradually release responsibility by reducing scaffolds for students who are ready, while still maintaining support for those who need it. Overall, this observation reinforced the importance of aligning instructional strategies with students' language proficiency levels while still maintaining high expectations for engagement and comprehension.

Observation 2 - ENL 3 Classroom

Where: Westhampton Beach High School

Date: March 26th, 2026

Time: 5th period, 10:35am-11:16am

Pre-Observation Preparation:

The purpose of this observation was to examine how instructional strategies shift for students at a higher level of English proficiency, particularly in terms of independence, academic language use, and reading comprehension. I prepared by bringing my laptop and using a structured observation format to document descriptive, reflective, and analytic notes.

Descriptive Notes (Objective):

10:35 AM – Students enter the classroom and sit in rows facing the board. The classroom walls display anchor charts with academic vocabulary and sentence starters. The teacher begins class with a Do Now projected on the board: *"What is one challenge people faced during the Great Depression?"* Students take out notebooks and begin writing.

10:38 AM – Students write independently. Several students write full sentences, while others refer to notes from previous lessons. The teacher circulates and asks questions (Q) such as, "Can you explain why that was a challenge?"

10:41 AM – The teacher asks students to share responses. Students raise their hands and respond in complete sentences. One student states, "People did not have jobs, so they could not buy food." The teacher nods and asks a follow-up question (Q): "Can you add more detail?"

10:44 AM – The teacher introduces the lesson objective: *Students will analyze a short text and identify cause-and-effect relationships.* The teacher briefly reviews the concept of cause and effect using an example written on the board.

10:47 AM – Students receive a short informational text about the Great Depression. The text is longer than in the previous observation and contains fewer visuals. Students begin reading independently.

10:51 AM – The teacher asks students to annotate the text by underlining causes and circling effects. Some students begin marking the text immediately, while others reread sections before annotating.

10:56 AM – Students work in pairs (GR) to compare annotations. Students discuss their answers and point to specific parts of the text. The teacher circulates and asks guiding questions such as, "What caused this event?"

11:02 AM – Students complete a written response identifying one cause-and-effect relationship from the text. Students are expected to write in complete sentences without sentence frames.

11:10 AM – Whole class discussion. Students share responses and explain their reasoning. Some students reference specific lines from the text. The teacher asks follow-up questions (Q) to encourage deeper explanation.

11:14 AM – The teacher summarizes key ideas and reinforces the concept of cause and effect.

11:16 AM – Lesson concludes. Students submit their written responses.

Reflective Notes:

Students demonstrated a higher level of independence compared to the ENL 2 class. Many students were able to read and annotate the text without needing as much direct support, and several students used complete sentences when responding. The classroom environment still felt supportive, but there was a noticeable shift toward more student-driven learning, particularly during independent reading and partner discussions. Students appeared more confident in engaging with the text and contributing to class discussions.

I also noticed that students were more willing to take risks with language, even if their responses were not always fully developed. During partner work, many students were actively discussing their ideas and referring back to the text, which showed engagement and a developing

ability to use academic language in context. This highlighted how increased proficiency allows for more interaction and less reliance on structured scaffolds.

At the same time, while students were more independent, some still struggled with explaining their reasoning in detail. They were able to identify cause-and-effect relationships but did not always elaborate on their responses or provide clear justification using evidence from the text. This made me reflect on the importance of continuing to support academic language development, even at higher proficiency levels, particularly in areas such as elaboration, justification, and use of content-specific vocabulary.

If I were teaching this lesson, I might incorporate a brief model of a strong written response to help students better understand expectations for elaboration. I would also consider providing optional supports, such as sentence starters or guiding questions, for students who still need them, while allowing more advanced students to respond independently. Additionally, I might include a quick peer review or discussion component where students evaluate each other's responses, which could help reinforce expectations and promote deeper thinking.

Analytic Notes:

This lesson demonstrated a clear shift from heavily scaffolded instruction to a more independent, student-centered approach, which is appropriate for students at a higher level of English proficiency. Students were expected to annotate independently and write complete responses without sentence frames. Although the lesson objective emphasized independent textual analysis, several students still relied on partner discussion before responding, suggesting oral rehearsal remained an important scaffold for language production and comprehension. One student explained, "People did not have jobs, so they could not buy food," demonstrating a

developing ability to explain cause-and-effect relationships using academic language. This suggests scaffolds were gradually reduced while rigor remained high. While scaffolding was still present, it was less explicit and more embedded within the task itself. Rather than relying on structured supports such as sentence frames, students were expected to apply previously learned strategies independently. This aligns with the concept of gradually releasing responsibility to students as their language proficiency increases, allowing them to take greater ownership of both their learning and language use (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014).

The teacher continued to support comprehension through strategic questioning and modeling of academic expectations, rather than direct scaffolds. For example, follow-up questions prompted students to expand and clarify their responses, encouraging more complex language production. This reflects a transition toward more advanced language use, where students are expected not only to identify information, but also to explain, justify, and elaborate on their thinking. This type of questioning plays a key role in pushing students beyond basic comprehension toward deeper analytical thinking.

The use of annotation and text-based discussion further supported both reading comprehension and academic language development. Annotation encouraged students to interact directly with the text, while partner and whole-class discussions provided opportunities to verbalize and refine their understanding. These strategies align with sheltered instruction practices, where students engage with grade-level content while receiving appropriate, embedded supports (Echevarría et al., 2017). Additionally, the focus on identifying cause-and-effect relationships required students to engage in higher-order thinking, as they had to analyze relationships between events rather than simply recall information.

The lesson also demonstrated effective differentiation through task expectations rather than materials. All students worked with the same text, maintaining a consistent level of rigor, but the teacher adjusted support through questioning, feedback, and interaction. Some students were prompted to extend their responses, while others received more guided support. This approach reflects an understanding that differentiation can occur through process and teacher interaction, not just through modified materials.

Overall, this lesson illustrates an effective balance between rigor and support, where students are challenged to engage with complex content while still receiving the guidance necessary to succeed. The instructional strategies observed support both language development and content understanding, which are essential for English learners as they progress toward greater independence in academic settings.

Key Areas Observed:

a. **Classroom Management & Environment:**

   Students were seated in rows facing the board. Anchor charts with vocabulary and sentence starters were displayed.

b. **Instructional Strategies:**

   Independent reading, annotation, partner discussion, and written response.

c. **Teacher-Student / Student-Student Interactions:**

   Frequent questioning (Q), peer collaboration (GR), and student explanation of reasoning.

d. **Materials & Technology:**

   Informational text and notebooks were used. No technology was observed.

e. **Differentiation:**

Less reliance on scaffolds; differentiation occurred through teacher support and questioning.

Post-Observation Reflection:

After reviewing this observation, I noticed the importance of gradually shifting from structured support to more independent learning as students' language proficiency develops. This lesson highlighted how students can engage with more complex texts and tasks when expectations are increased appropriately, and how reducing scaffolds can encourage students to take greater ownership of their learning.

This observation made me reflect on how I can better scaffold this transition in my own classroom. While I often provide strong supports, such as sentence frames and guided questions, I want to be more intentional about gradually removing them to promote independence. I also noticed that even at higher proficiency levels, students still benefit from targeted support in developing academic language, particularly when explaining their reasoning in writing.

In my ENL social studies classroom, I see similar patterns when students analyze primary sources or discuss historical concepts. Students are often able to identify key ideas, but may struggle to fully explain their thinking or support their responses with evidence. Because of this, I would like to incorporate more opportunities for extended writing and explanation, as well as model what strong, detailed responses look like. I would also consider using strategies such as peer discussion or collaborative analysis to help students refine their ideas before writing.

This observation reinforced the importance of finding a balance between maintaining high expectations and providing appropriate support. By gradually releasing responsibility and encouraging more independent thinking, I can help students build both their confidence and their ability to use academic language effectively.

Observation 3 - Integrated ENL Math Classroom (Co-Taught)

Where: Westhampton Beach High School

Date: March 27th, 2026

Time: 6th period**,** 11:20am–12:01pm

Pre-Observation Preparation:

The purpose of this observation was to examine how ENL strategies are implemented in a co-taught content-area classroom, specifically focusing on how language supports are integrated into a high school algebra lesson. I prepared by bringing my laptop and using a structured observation format to document descriptive, reflective, and analytic notes.

Descriptive Notes (Objective):

11:20 AM – Students enter the classroom and sit in rows facing the front board. Both the math teacher and ENL teacher are present. A Do Now is projected: *"Solve the system of equations:*

$2x + y = 10$

$x - y = 2$*."* Students take out notebooks and begin working independently.

11:23 AM – Students begin solving the system. Some students use substitution, while others look at previous notes. The ENL teacher circulates and asks, “What is your first step?” (Q), prompting students to explain their thinking.

11:25 AM – The math teacher reviews the Do Now on the board, solving step-by-step using substitution. The teacher explains how to isolate a variable and substitute into the second equation. The ENL teacher reinforces key vocabulary such as “substitute,” “solution,” and “variable,” and gestures to emphasize meaning.

11:28 AM – The math teacher introduces the lesson objective: solving systems of equations using substitution and elimination. The objective is written on the board. The ENL teacher restates the objective in simplified language and points to key terms.

11:31 AM – The math teacher models a more complex system of equations, demonstrating both substitution and elimination methods. Students copy the steps into their notebooks. The ENL teacher highlights vocabulary such as “coefficient,” “eliminate,” and “combine like terms,” pointing to each step as it is completed.

11:35 AM – Students begin guided practice problems independently. Some students choose substitution, while others attempt elimination. Several students refer back to the example on the board for support.

11:40 AM – Students transition into partner work (GR) to compare answers and methods. Students discuss their approaches and point to their work. One student says, “I eliminated y first,” while another explains, “I substituted for x.”

11:45 AM – Both teachers circulate. The math teacher checks for accuracy and correct procedures, while the ENL teacher asks questions such as, “Why did you choose that method?” and “What does your solution mean?” (Q), encouraging students to explain their reasoning using academic language.

11:50 AM – Students continue working on additional systems. Some students raise their hands for clarification. The ENL teacher provides support using simplified explanations and gestures, while prompting students to restate their steps in their own words.

11:55 AM – The class comes back together. The math teacher solves a problem on the board and asks students to explain each step. A student responds, “We eliminated x first,” and the teacher follows up with, “Why does that work?”

11:58 AM – Students complete one final system independently as an exit task.

12:01 PM – Lesson ends. Students submit their work and begin packing up.

Reflective Notes:

Students appeared engaged throughout the lesson and demonstrated a higher level of independence when solving problems. Many students were able to apply different methods, such as substitution and elimination, which showed varying levels of conceptual understanding. The co-teaching model created a supportive environment, as both teachers were actively involved in instruction and student support, allowing for more individualized attention.

Students seemed comfortable asking questions and discussing their approaches during partner work. The use of peer interaction allowed students to compare methods and clarify their

thinking. This highlighted the importance of discussion in reinforcing both mathematical understanding and language development.

At the same time, I observed that some students were able to solve the systems procedurally but had difficulty clearly explaining their reasoning using academic language. While they could complete the steps, they did not always fully articulate why those steps were necessary. This made me reflect on the importance of continuing to integrate language supports into content instruction, even in more advanced classes.

If I were teaching this lesson, I would incorporate more structured opportunities for students to explain their thinking, such as using sentence starters like "First I…, then I…, because…". I would also consider modeling what a strong verbal or written explanation looks like, so students have a clear example of how to communicate their reasoning.

Analytic Notes:

This lesson demonstrated how sheltered instruction strategies can be effectively integrated into a high school algebra classroom through co-teaching. The collaboration between the math teacher and ENL teacher allowed for both content and language objectives to be addressed simultaneously. The ENL teacher supported comprehension by reinforcing academic vocabulary, simplifying language, and using gestures, which aligns with principles of making content comprehensible for English learners (Echevarría et al., 2017).

The lesson also reflected elements of scaffolding, though in a more embedded form compared to the ENL-only classroom observations. Instead of explicit supports like sentence frames, scaffolding occurred through modeling, guided practice, and strategic questioning. This

aligns with research on L2 instruction, which emphasizes supporting students within meaningful, content-based tasks (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014).

An important aspect of this lesson was the integration of academic language within a math context. Students used vocabulary such as “substitute,” “eliminate,” and “solution” while discussing methods. One student stated, “I eliminated y first,” showing how mathematical reasoning and language production were developed simultaneously. This reflects WIDA’s emphasis on disciplinary language use across content areas (WIDA Consortium, 2020). Students were expected not only to solve systems of equations, but also to explain their reasoning using terms such as “substitute,” “eliminate,” and “solution.” This highlights how language development is essential across all content areas, including mathematics.

The use of partner discussion and student explanation reflects communicative approaches to language learning, as students engaged in meaningful dialogue about their thinking. However, the level of language production varied, and some students relied more on procedural understanding than verbal explanation, indicating an area for continued development.

The lesson also demonstrated effective differentiation through co-teaching and multiple solution methods. Students were able to approach problems using substitution or elimination, allowing for flexibility based on their understanding. Additionally, teacher support was adjusted based on student need, with the ENL teacher providing more language-focused support. Student written responses were also collected through an independent exit task, providing an additional measure of both procedural understanding and mathematical language use (see Appendix A5).

Overall, this lesson reflects a strong balance between rigor and support, where students are engaged in complex problem-solving while also developing academic language. This integration of content and language is essential for English learners in content-area classrooms.

Key Areas Observed:

a. **Classroom Management & Environment:**

   Students were seated in rows facing the board. Both teachers actively circulated and supported students.

b. **Instructional Strategies:**

   Modeling, guided practice, independent problem-solving, and partner discussion.

c. **Teacher-Student / Student-Student Interactions:**

   Frequent questioning (Q), peer collaboration (GR), and student explanation of reasoning.

d. **Materials & Technology:**

   Whiteboard, notebooks, and projected problems were used. No additional technology observed.

e. **Differentiation:**

   Differentiation occurred through co-teaching, questioning strategies, and the use of multiple solution methods, allowing students to approach problems at different levels of understanding.

Post-Observation Reflection:

After reviewing this observation, I noticed the importance of intentionally integrating language development into content-area instruction, even in subjects like mathematics. The co-

teaching model allowed students to access complex material while receiving targeted language support, reinforcing the value of collaboration between content and ENL teachers.

This observation made me reflect on my own teaching practice, particularly in my ENL social studies classroom. While I often focus on content understanding, this lesson emphasized the importance of also prioritizing how students explain their thinking using academic language. I would like to incorporate more opportunities for students to verbalize and write about their reasoning, especially during analytical tasks.

Moving forward, I will be more intentional about embedding language objectives into content lessons and providing structured opportunities for students to practice explaining their thinking. This observation reinforced the importance of supporting both content mastery and language development simultaneously.

Observation 4 – Integrated ENL Living Environment Classroom (Co-Taught)

Where: Westhampton Beach High School

Date: March 30th, 2026

Time: 2nd period, 8:20am–9:01am

Pre-Observation Preparation:

The purpose of this observation was to examine how ENL strategies are implemented in a co-taught science classroom, with a focus on how language supports are integrated into content instruction. I prepared by bringing my laptop and using a structured observation format to document descriptive, reflective, and analytic notes.

Descriptive Notes (Objective):

8:20 AM – Students enter the classroom and sit in groups of four. Both the Living Environment teacher and ENL teacher are present. A Do Now is projected: *"What is the function of the cell membrane?"* Students take out notebooks and begin writing responses.

8:23 AM – Students write independently. Some students refer to notes or diagrams in their notebooks. The ENL teacher circulates and asks, "What does 'function' mean?" (Q), prompting students to explain in their own words.

8:26 AM – The Living Environment teacher reviews the Do Now. A student responds, "It controls what goes in and out," and the teacher restates and expands the answer using academic language. The ENL teacher writes key vocabulary on the board: *cell membrane, function, regulate*.

8:29 AM – The teacher introduces the lesson objective: understanding diffusion and osmosis. The objective is written on the board. The ENL teacher restates the objective in simpler language and points to a diagram of a cell displayed on the board.

8:32 AM – The Living Environment teacher presents a diagram showing diffusion. The teacher explains how particles move from high concentration to low concentration. The ENL teacher gestures to show movement and repeats key terms such as "concentration" and "movement."

8:34 AM – The teacher conducts a brief demonstration using a visual model to show particle movement across a membrane.

8:36 AM – Students receive a short reading passage about diffusion and osmosis, along with a diagram. Students read independently, with some students pointing to the diagram while reading.

8:40 AM – Students work in groups (GR) to answer comprehension questions about the reading. Students discuss their answers and refer back to the text and diagram. One student says, “It moves from high to low,” while another adds, “because of concentration.”

8:45 AM – Both teachers circulate. The Living Environment teacher focuses on content understanding, while the ENL teacher asks questions such as, “Can you explain that in a full sentence?” (Q), encouraging use of academic language.

8:50 AM – Students complete a short written response explaining diffusion in their own words. Some students refer back to the diagram, while others discuss briefly with their group before writing.

8:55 AM – Whole class discussion. Students share responses. The teacher asks follow-up questions to clarify and extend understanding. The ENL teacher reinforces vocabulary by pointing to words on the board.

8:58 AM – The teacher summarizes key concepts and reviews vocabulary terms.

9:01 AM – Lesson ends. Students submit their work and prepare for the next class.

Reflective Notes:

Students appeared engaged throughout the lesson, particularly during group work and when interacting with the diagrams. The use of visuals seemed to play a significant role in supporting comprehension, as many students referred to the diagram while reading and

discussing the content. The co-teaching model allowed for both content and language support, creating a classroom environment where students felt comfortable participating.

I noticed that students were able to explain basic concepts, such as diffusion, but often relied on short or incomplete responses. While they demonstrated understanding of the content, they sometimes struggled to express their ideas using precise academic language. This highlighted the importance of continuing to support language development, even when students appear to understand the content conceptually.

If I were teaching this lesson, I would incorporate more structured opportunities for students to practice using academic language, such as sentence frames or guided discussion prompts. I would also consider modeling a strong written response, so students have a clear example of how to explain scientific concepts in complete sentences.

Analytic Notes:

This lesson demonstrated how sheltered instruction strategies can be effectively applied in a science classroom through co-teaching. The collaboration between the Living Environment teacher and ENL teacher allowed for both content and language objectives to be addressed simultaneously. The ENL teacher supported comprehension by reinforcing vocabulary, using gestures, and simplifying explanations, which aligns with principles of making content comprehensible for English learners (Echevarría et al., 2017).

The lesson also reflected the importance of visual supports in L2 instruction, particularly in science. Diagrams played a key role in helping students understand abstract concepts such as

diffusion and osmosis. This aligns with research emphasizing the use of multiple modalities to support comprehension and language development (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014).

Another important aspect of the lesson was the use of structured student interaction. Group work allowed students to discuss concepts and clarify their understanding collaboratively, which supports both comprehension and language use. This reflects communicative approaches to language learning, where students develop language through meaningful interaction.

The lesson also demonstrated differentiation through co-teaching and varied supports. While all students worked with the same content, the ENL teacher provided additional language support to students who needed it. This approach maintains academic rigor while ensuring that all students have access to the material.

Overall, this lesson highlights the importance of integrating language development into content instruction. Students were able to engage with complex scientific concepts while receiving the support necessary to develop both their understanding and their academic language skills.

Key Areas Observed:

a. **Classroom Management & Environment:**

   Students were seated in groups, promoting collaboration. Both teachers actively supported students.

b. **Instructional Strategies:**

   Use of visuals, direct instruction, reading, group work, and written responses.

c. **Teacher-Student / Student-Student Interactions:**

   Frequent questioning (Q), group discussion (GR), and teacher feedback.

d. **Materials & Technology:**

   Diagrams, reading passage, and board notes were used. No additional technology observed.

e. **Differentiation:**

   Differentiation occurred through co-teaching, visual supports, and teacher questioning.

Post-Observation Reflection:

After reviewing this observation, I noticed the importance of integrating visual and language supports when teaching complex scientific concepts. The lesson demonstrated how visuals, such as diagrams, can significantly enhance comprehension for English learners while also supporting language development.

This observation made me reflect on my own teaching practice, particularly in how I incorporate visuals and academic vocabulary into my lessons. While I frequently use images and primary sources in social studies, this lesson reinforced the importance of explicitly connecting visuals to language development.

Moving forward, I would like to be more intentional about incorporating structured opportunities for students to explain content using academic language, both verbally and in writing. This observation reinforced the importance of supporting both content understanding and language development across all subject areas.

Interview 1 – ENL Teacher

Role: ENL Teacher (ENL 2 & 3)

Setting: Westhampton Beach High School

Date: March 25th, 2026

1. Pre-Interview Preparation:

Prior to conducting the interview, permission was obtained from the teacher. The purpose of the interview was explained, and the teacher consented to participate. No identifying student information was discussed.

2. Conducting the Interview:

The interview was conducted in a quiet and comfortable classroom setting to allow for a relaxed and open conversation. At the beginning of the interview, the purpose of the discussion was explained, including how the information would be used for this assignment. The participant was informed that their responses would remain anonymous. Prepared questions were used to guide the interview, along with follow-up questions to clarify and expand on responses.

3. Interview Questions & Responses (Transcript Style)

Classroom Approach & Methodology:

Q1: How do you adapt your lessons to cater to diverse students in terms of linguistic, cultural, and ability differences?

Teacher:

"I try to differentiate based on students' language levels first. For lower-level students, I use more visuals, sentence frames, and structured activities so they have support. For higher-level students, I give them more independence and expect more detailed responses. I also try to connect the content to students' backgrounds when I can, so it feels more relevant and engaging for them."

Q2: Which teaching methods or strategies have you found most effective for teaching English in this setting?

Teacher:

"Scaffolding is definitely the most effective strategy. I use modeling, think-alouds, and guided practice a lot so students can see how to approach a task before doing it on their own. I also use a lot of structured discussion, like turn-and-talk, because it gives students more opportunities to actually use the language."

Q3: How do you incorporate state and professional standards into your lessons?

Teacher:

"I align my lessons with the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards and the WIDA standards. I usually plan with both a content objective and a language objective, so I'm focusing on what students are learning and how they're using language at the same time."

Materials & Assessment:

Q4: What materials do you use most frequently, and why?

Teacher:

"I use adapted texts a lot, especially ones that include visuals and simplified language. I also use graphic organizers and sentence frames to help students organize their thinking. Those materials

make the content more accessible and help students feel more confident when they're responding."

Q5: How do you evaluate or assess the progress of your English learners? Can you provide an example?

Teacher:

"I use both informal and formal assessments. For example, I might listen to students during discussions to see how they're using language, and I also look at their written responses to reading tasks. Over time, I look for growth in how clearly they can explain their ideas and whether they're using more academic vocabulary."

Challenges & Solutions:

Q6: Have you encountered any specific challenges while teaching this demographic of students? How did you overcome them?

Teacher:

"One big challenge is that students often understand more than they can express, especially in writing. To help with that, I provide structured supports like sentence frames at first, and then I gradually remove them as students become more confident. Building their confidence is really important, because once they feel more comfortable, they participate more."

Interview 2 – Math Teacher (Co-Taught Algebra Class)

Role: Algebra Teacher (Integrated ENL Classroom)

Setting: Westhampton Beach High School

Date: March 27th, 2026

1. Pre-Interview Preparation:

Prior to conducting the interview, permission was obtained from the teacher. The purpose of the interview was explained, and the teacher consented to participate. No identifying student information was discussed.

2. Conducting the Interview:

The interview was conducted in a quiet and comfortable classroom setting to allow for a relaxed and open conversation. At the beginning of the interview, the purpose of the discussion was explained, including how the information would be used for this assignment. The participant was informed that their responses would remain anonymous. Prepared questions were used to guide the interview, along with follow-up questions to clarify and expand on responses.

3. Interview Questions & Responses (Transcript Style):

Classroom Approach & Methodology:

Q1: How do you adapt your lessons to cater to diverse students in terms of linguistic, cultural, and ability differences?

Teacher:

"In a co-taught classroom, I rely a lot on collaboration with the ENL teacher. We plan lessons together and think about how to make the content accessible. I try to break down complex problems into steps and model them clearly, and the ENL teacher helps reinforce vocabulary and simplify explanations when needed."

Q2: Which teaching methods or strategies have you found most effective for teaching English learners in this setting?

Teacher:

"Modeling is really important in math. I walk students through problems step-by-step so they can see the process. I also use guided practice before asking them to work independently. Another strategy that works well is having students explain their thinking, even if it's just to a partner."

Q3: How do you incorporate state and professional standards into your lessons?

Teacher:

"I align my lessons with the New York State math standards, and I also work with the ENL teacher to incorporate language objectives. So students are not just solving problems, but also explaining their reasoning using appropriate vocabulary."

Materials & Assessment:

Q4: What materials do you use most frequently, and why?

Teacher:

"I mainly use the textbook, guided notes, and practice problems. I also use the board a lot to model solutions step-by-step. In a co-taught class, we sometimes modify materials slightly or provide additional examples to support understanding."

Q5: How do you evaluate or assess the progress of your English learners? Can you provide an example?

Teacher:

"I use quizzes and classwork to assess understanding, but I also pay attention to how students explain their thinking. For example, if a student can solve a system of equations but can't explain the steps, that tells me they need more support with language."

Challenges & Solutions:

Q6: Have you encountered any specific challenges while teaching this demographic of students? How did you overcome them?

Teacher:

"One challenge is that math has a lot of specific vocabulary, and students can struggle with understanding what a problem is asking. To address this, we try to break down the language of the problem and highlight key terms. Working with the ENL teacher really helps with that."

Interview 3 – ENL Student (11th Grade, Expanding Level)

Grade: 11th

Proficiency Level: Expanding

Setting: Westhampton Beach High School

Date: March 30th, 2026

1. Pre-Interview Preparation:

Prior to conducting the interview, permission was obtained. The purpose of the interview was explained in a student-friendly manner, and the student agreed to participate. No identifying information was recorded.

2. Conducting the Interview:

The interview was conducted in a quiet classroom setting. The purpose of the interview was explained, and the student was informed that their responses would remain anonymous. Prepared questions were used, along with follow-up questions to better understand the student's experiences as an English learner.

3. Background Information:

Q1: How long have you been in the United States?

Student:

"I've been here for about three years."

Q2: What language is spoken in your home?

Student:

"Spanish."

Q3: What is your favorite subject in school?

Student:

"I like history because I understand it more, and we talk about real things that happened."

Q4: How are you doing in your classes right now?

Student:

"I think I'm doing pretty good. Sometimes it's hard, but I understand most of it."

4. Interview Questions & Responses:

Q5: What part of English is most difficult for you (reading, writing, speaking, listening, etc.)?

Student:

"Writing is the hardest because I know what I want to say, but I don't always know how to write it correctly."

Q6: What helps you the most in your classes?

Student:

"It helps when the teacher explains things step-by-step and when we can talk to a partner first. That helps me think before I answer."

Q7: How do you feel about speaking in class?

Student:

"I feel more comfortable now than before, but sometimes I'm still nervous if I'm not sure if it's right."

Q8: What do teachers do that makes learning easier for you?

Student:

"When they give examples and explain again in a different way. Also when they give us time to talk before answering."

Interview 4 – ENL Student (9th Grade, Emerging Level)

Grade: 9th

Proficiency Level: Emerging

Setting: Westhampton Beach High School

Date: March 31st, 2026

1. Pre-Interview Preparation:

Prior to conducting the interview, permission was obtained. The purpose of the interview was explained in simple, clear language, and the student agreed to participate. No identifying information was recorded.

2. Conducting the Interview:

The interview was conducted in a quiet classroom setting to ensure the student felt comfortable. The purpose of the interview was explained clearly, and the student was reassured that there were no right or wrong answers. Questions were asked slowly and clarified when needed.

3. Background Information:

Q1: How long have you been in the United States?

Student:

"One year."

Q2: What language is spoken in your home?

Student:

"Spanish."

Q3: What is your favorite subject in school?

Student:

"I like math because it's numbers."

Q4: How are you doing in your classes right now?

Student:

"Sometimes good, sometimes hard."

4. Interview Questions & Responses

Q5: What part of English is most difficult for you?

Student:

"Reading is hard because I don't know all the words."

Q6: What helps you the most in your classes?

Student:

"When the teacher shows pictures and explains slow."

Q7: How do you feel about speaking in class?

Student:

"I feel shy. I don't like to talk a lot."

Q8: What do teachers do that makes learning easier for you?

Student:

"When they help me and explain again."

Analysis of Interviews and Observations

The purpose of the observations and interviews conducted during this fieldwork was to better understand how instructional practices support English Language Learners (ELLs) across different classroom settings, as well as how students experience these supports. By examining both teacher and student perspectives, this analysis identifies key patterns in instructional strategies, challenges, and effective practices that contribute to language development and content understanding.

Scaffolding as a Foundational Instructional Strategy:

One of the most prominent and consistent themes across both interviews and observations was the importance of scaffolding in supporting English learners. The ENL teacher emphasized this directly, stating, *"Scaffolding is definitely the most effective strategy… I use modeling, think-alouds, and guided practice so students can see how to approach a task."* This approach was clearly reflected in the ENL classroom observations, where students were supported through visuals, sentence frames, chunked texts, and structured activities that allowed them to engage with content at an appropriate level. This pattern was also visible in my handwritten fieldnotes, which documented repeated use of modeling, visuals, and structured teacher prompts across classrooms (see Appendix A2). Rather than isolated strategies, scaffolds functioned as a consistent instructional system that increased access and participation.

In the co-taught algebra classroom, scaffolding was still present but in a more embedded and content-specific form. The math teacher explained, *"I try to break down complex problems into steps and model them clearly,"* demonstrating how scaffolding can be adapted across

content areas. The ENL teacher's role in reinforcing vocabulary and simplifying explanations further supported students' understanding. These practices align directly with the SIOP model, which emphasizes scaffolding and comprehensible input as essential components of effective instruction for English learners (Echevarría et al., 2017). While both teachers emphasized the importance of scaffolding, the ENL teacher relied on more explicit supports such as sentence frames and visuals, whereas the content-area teacher embedded scaffolding within instruction through modeling and step-by-step problem solving.

Student responses reinforced the importance of these supports. The 11th-grade student noted, *"It helps when the teacher explains things step-by-step and when we can talk to a partner first,"* while the younger student stated, *"When the teacher shows pictures and explains slow."* These responses highlight how scaffolding not only supports comprehension but also builds student confidence. This reflects broader research on second language acquisition, which emphasizes the importance of structured support and comprehensible input (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014). While scaffolding was consistently effective, it also raises questions about how and when supports should be removed, as some students demonstrated reliance on structured supports rather than independent language production.

The Role of Academic Language Across Content Areas:

In addition to scaffolding, another critical theme that emerged was the role of academic language in student success. Both teachers emphasized that understanding content is not enough; students must also be able to articulate their thinking using discipline-specific vocabulary. The math teacher noted, *"If a student can solve a system of equations but can't explain the steps, that*

tells me they need more support with language." This highlights the dual demand placed on English learners in content classrooms.

This challenge was also evident in the classroom observations. In both ENL and content-area settings, students were often able to complete tasks but struggled to elaborate on their responses or justify their thinking using academic language. The ENL teacher further explained this challenge, stating, *"Students often understand more than they can express, especially in writing."*

Student interviews strongly supported this pattern. The 11th-grade student shared, *"Writing is the hardest because I know what I want to say, but I don't always know how to write it correctly,"* while the younger student expressed difficulty with vocabulary, stating, *"I don't know all the words."* These responses demonstrate that language development remains a central challenge across proficiency levels and content areas. This suggests that even as students develop content understanding, targeted support for academic language must remain a consistent instructional priority rather than something that is phased out over time.

This aligns with research emphasizing that academic language must be explicitly taught and reinforced across all subject areas, a key component of sheltered instruction (Echevarría et al., 2017).

Student Interaction as a Tool for Language Development:

A third significant theme was the importance of structured student interaction in supporting both language development and content understanding. The ENL teacher emphasized this approach, stating, *"I use a lot of structured discussion… because it gives students more*

opportunities to use the language." Similarly, the math teacher highlighted the value of peer explanation, noting that having students explain their thinking helps reinforce understanding.

This was consistently observed across all classrooms, particularly during partner and group work. Students were frequently given opportunities to discuss their ideas before sharing with the whole class, which appeared to increase both participation and confidence. These structured interactions created a low-risk environment for students to practice language and clarify their thinking.

Student responses further emphasized the importance of interaction. The 11th-grade student stated, *"It helps when we can talk to a partner first… that helps me think before I answer."* This supports communicative language teaching approaches, which emphasize meaningful interaction as a key component of language development (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014).

Balancing Support and Independence:

Another important theme that emerged was the need to balance structured support with increasing student independence. The ENL teacher described this process, stating, *"I provide structured supports at first, and then I gradually remove them as students become more confident."* This gradual release of responsibility was clearly reflected when comparing the ENL 2 and ENL 3 classroom observations. In the ENL 2 classroom, students relied heavily on scaffolds such as sentence frames and guided instruction, while in the ENL 3 classroom, students were expected to work more independently and produce more extended responses.

However, both observations and interviews revealed that even higher-level students continue to need support, particularly in developing academic language. The 11th-grade student,

while more independent, still expressed challenges with writing and elaboration. This suggests that independence should not mean the complete removal of support, but rather a shift in the type of support provided.

This balance reflects best practices in language instruction, particularly within the SIOP framework, where teachers gradually release responsibility while continuing to provide targeted scaffolds based on student need (Echevarría et al., 2017).

Implications for Instructional Practice:

These findings have important implications for my own teaching practice as an ENL social studies teacher. First, they reinforce the importance of consistently integrating scaffolding strategies, such as visuals, modeling, and structured discussion, to support comprehension of complex historical content. Second, they highlight the need to explicitly teach and reinforce academic language, particularly when students are expected to analyze primary sources or explain historical concepts. This aligns with WIDA's emphasis on academic language development across content areas, which highlights the importance of integrating language instruction within content learning (WIDA Consortium, 2020). For example, in my own social studies classroom, I could apply these findings by using sentence frames during document analysis such as, "This source suggests ___ because ___," or by using visuals and vocabulary previews before complex historical readings. This would support both language development and historical thinking.

Additionally, the importance of student interaction suggests that I should continue incorporating opportunities for collaborative discussion, such as think-pair-share and small group analysis, to support both comprehension and language development. Finally, the theme of

balancing support and independence reminds me to be more intentional about gradually releasing responsibility, while still providing targeted support for students who need it.

These findings also align with both the WIDA standards and the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards, which emphasize integrating language development with content instruction and supporting students in using academic language across disciplines. These practices also reflect culturally and linguistically responsive teaching by addressing the diverse linguistic needs of multilingual learners and promoting equitable access to content.

Taken together, the interviews and observations highlight that effective instruction for English learners requires a purposeful integration of scaffolding, meaningful interaction, and explicit attention to academic language. These elements work in combination to support both content understanding and language development, and are essential in fostering students' long-term academic success across content areas.

Conclusion

This fieldwork experience deepened my understanding of what effective instruction for multilingual learners truly requires. Prior to these observations, I viewed scaffolding primarily as a set of support strategies such as visuals, sentence frames, or guided practice. Through observing multiple classroom settings, I now understand scaffolding as a responsive process in which teachers continually adjust language demands, task complexity, and student independence based on learner needs. I also learned that language development is not limited to ENL classrooms, but must be intentionally embedded across all content areas, including mathematics, science, and social studies.

One of the most important insights I gained was the distinction between student comprehension and student expression. In several classrooms, students appeared to understand concepts but struggled to explain their reasoning using academic English. This reinforced the need for explicit language objectives, structured discussion, and opportunities for writing across disciplines. As an ENL social studies educator, I will place greater emphasis on helping students communicate historical thinking through speaking, writing, and evidence-based discussion.

This project also strengthened my appreciation for collaboration, particularly within co-taught settings where content and language specialists work together to increase access and rigor simultaneously. Moving forward, I will use the combined lessons of this fieldwork, TESOL coursework, and professional standards such as WIDA and SIOP to design instruction that is rigorous, inclusive, and responsive to multilingual learners. Ultimately, this experience helped shape my identity as an educator who sees language support not as an add-on, but as essential to equitable teaching and learning.

References

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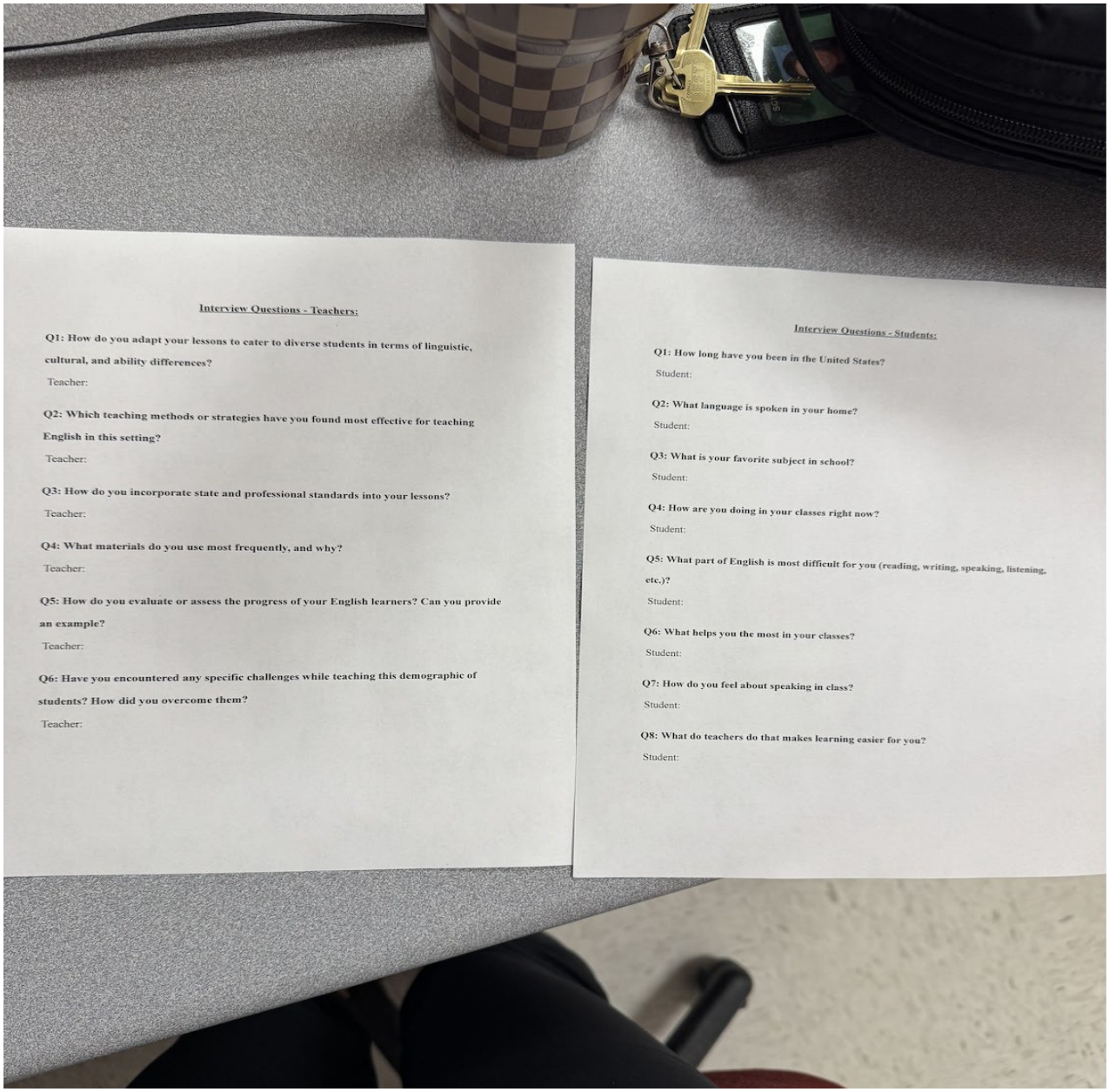
Echevarría, J., Vogt, M. E., & Short, D. J. (2017). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model* (5th ed.). Pearson.

WIDA Consortium. (2020). *WIDA English language development standards framework, 2020 edition: Kindergarten–grade 12*. Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.

Appendix

Appendix A1. Interview Question Guide:



Interview Questions - Teachers:

Q1: How do you adapt your lessons to cater to diverse students in terms of linguistic, cultural, and ability differences?

Teacher:

Q2: Which teaching methods or strategies have you found most effective for teaching English in this setting?

Teacher:

Q3: How do you incorporate state and professional standards into your lessons?

Teacher:

Q4: What materials do you use most frequently, and why?

Teacher:

Q5: How do you evaluate or assess the progress of your English learners? Can you provide an example?

Teacher:

Q6: Have you encountered any specific challenges while teaching this demographic of students? How did you overcome them?

Teacher:

Interview Questions - Students:

Q1: How long have you been in the United States?

Student:

Q2: What language is spoken in your home?

Student:

Q3: What is your favorite subject in school?

Student:

Q4: How are you doing in your classes right now?

Student:

Q5: What part of English is most difficult for you (reading, writing, speaking, listening, etc.)?

Student:

Q6: What helps you the most in your classes?

Student:

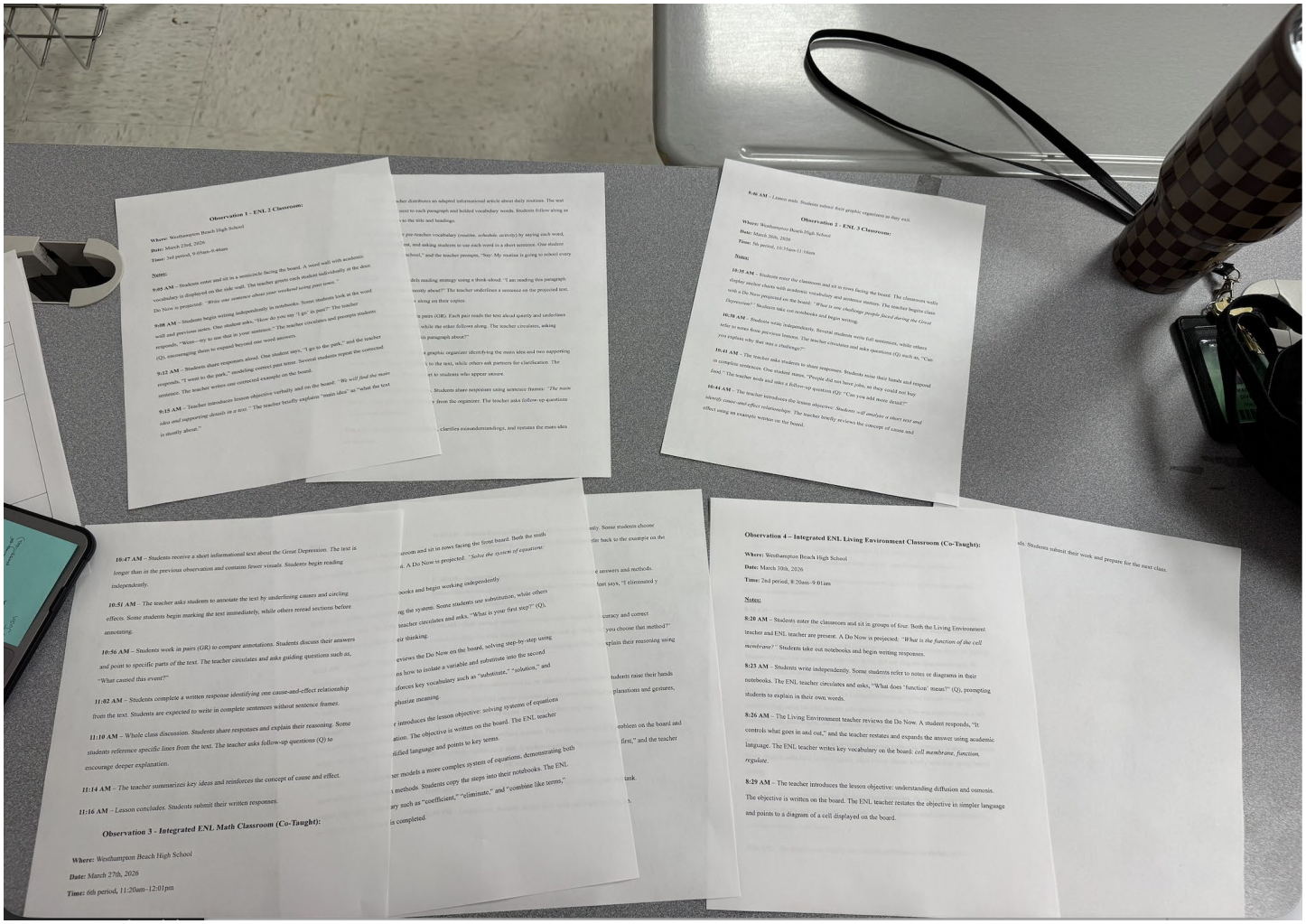
Q7: How do you feel about speaking in class?

Student:

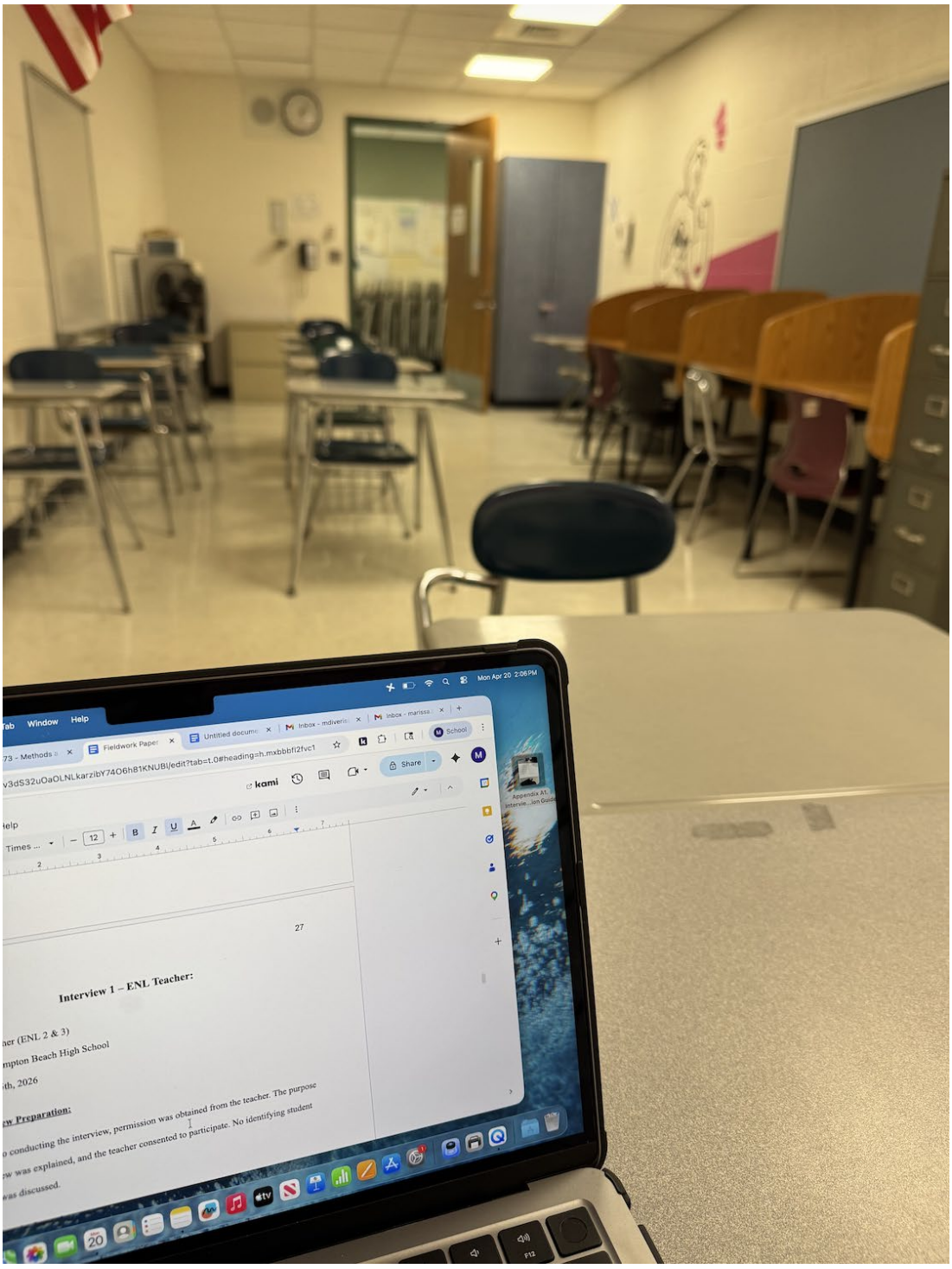
Q8: What do teachers do that makes learning easier for you?

Student:

Appendix A2. Sample Observation Field Notes:



Appendix A3. Classroom Interview Setting:



Appendix A4. Classroom Observation Setting:

Appendix A5. Sample Instructional Material Used During Observation